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Nuclear Power Opposition Surfaces in Europe

Until last month, opposition to nuclear power seemed to be confined almost exclusively to the United States. European governments were putting their nuclear programs into effect with only token public opposition, and with few of the noisy confrontations that have persistently erupted in the United States. But two events, which occurred in the space of a few days, have changed that situation. For once, anti-nuclear happenings in Europe are causing reverberations in the United States, instead of the reverse.

The first incident was the defeat of Olof Palme's Social Democrats in elections in Sweden, after 44 years in power. A potent issue in the later stages of the campaign was the Social Democrats' plans for a vast expansion of Sweden's nuclear program with the leader of the opposition Center Party, Thorbjorn Falldin, not only promising to scrap the nuclear plan if he was elected, but also promising to shut down the five reactors already in operation and to cancel the start-up of a sixth plant. After his defeat, Palme was quoted as saying that the injection of the nuclear power issue in the campaign was the decisive factor which tipped the scales toward the Center Party.

It now remains to be seen whether Falldin will be able to deliver on his promise. The Social Democrats had planned to make Sweden the world's largest producer of nuclear power, in terms of energy generated per capita, by 1990. It will be no easy task to find alternatives to fill the gap.

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The first test of the new government's promises will not be far off, however. Loading of fuel into Sweden's sixth nuclear plant is scheduled to begin this month, and thus one of the government's first decisions will be to determine whether, and how, to prevent the plant's debut. One problem is that the plant was built by private industry, which would certainly demand massive compensation from the government if the fuel loading is cancelled. Since the Center Party pledged less interference with private industry, it will be politically difficult for it to begin its reign by scrapping a major industrial project.

The other, and perhaps more important happening was the publication in Britain of an influential study which contained some harsh criticisms of Britain's nuclear plans. The study, prepared by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, dealt mostly with issues which are also coming to a head in the United States. Its findings are therefore likely to have a marked influence on the nuclear debates in many countries — a suggestion which is reinforced by the swift response of the American nuclear industry to the report's criticisms.

The report's force derives much from the fact that it was produced by a broad-ranging committee, consisting of prominent people from a variety of backgrounds, under the chairmanship of Sir Brian Flowers, rector of Imperial College of Science and Technology, and a prominent nuclear physicist. Flowers has long been associated with Britain's nuclear program.

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In Brief

Following three months of negotiations, House-Senate Conferees approved an authorization bill for the National Science Foundation just in time for final passage before the adjournment. The sticking point was a Kennedy-inspired "Science for Citizens" program to provide NSF support for scientists to get involved in public issues. Kennedy wanted $3 million for the program but House members, objecting to possible support for public interest groups, insisted on $300,000. The Conferees settled on a figure of $1.2 million, and put some constraints on use of the funds.

Latest round in the cyclamate saga: The Food and Drug Administration has finally turned down a petition by Abbot laboratories, manufacturers of the sweetener, to allow cyclamates back on the market. FDA says there's insufficient evidence to determine that the stuff is safe. Abbott has asked for a public hearing, and is threatening to go to court if necessary.

Stanford University has established a committee which includes a public representative and an outside expert on safety systems for biological laboratories, to monitor recombinant DNA experiments at the university. Notably absent, however, is any representation from the Palo Alto government. The lack of city input into Harvard's recombinant DNA planning was the spark which ignited the dispute there (SGR Vol. VI, No. 13).

...British Commission Backs Nuclear Critics

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Although most of the report's criticisms were directed toward Britain's long-range nuclear plans, particularly those concerned with breeder reactors and plutonium recycle, it also had some sharp words to say about the more immediate problems. It was not all bad, however, for the report took note of the good safety record of the industry so far, and stated that "the abandonment of nuclear fission power would, however, be neither wise nor justified."

On nuclear safety, the report first notes that the risk of accidents is very small, but adds: "There can be little doubt that as the number of reactors in use throughout the world increases, there will in time be a major accident. Such an accident, even if it occurred abroad, would certainly cause anxiety in this and other countries and might require reactors to be shut down while safety aspects were reassessed. This alone suggests that it would be prudent to aim for diversity in energy supplies."

As for waste storage and disposal — a key issue in the United States — the report has some stinging criticism of the British government's efforts so far, and comes up with a recommendation which many nuclear critics are making elsewhere. "We believe," the commission states, "that a quite inadequate effort has been devoted to the problems of long-term waste management, and that there should be no substantial expansion of nuclear power until the feasibility of a method of safe disposal of high level wastes for the indefinite future has been established beyond reasonable doubt." The commission then goes on to state that it is fully aware that it may take between 10 and 20 years to develop and test the technology.

Finally, the commission urges delay in implementing programs for developing breeder reactors in Britain and for recycling plutonium as a fuel in nuclear power plants. The commission's recommendations are based on the fact that plutonium is a potential ingredient of an atomic bomb, and that an energy program based on the use of plutonium could result in the diversion of the material to terrorist groups. "It appears to us", the commission says, "that the dangers of creation of plutonium in large quantities in conditions of increasing world unrest are genuine and serious." It concludes that "we should not rely for energy supply on a process that produces such a hazardous substance as plutonium unless there is no reasonable alternative."

For those reasons, the commission recommended that the British government should delay giving the go-ahead for construction of a large breeder reactor — a decision that was imminent when the report appeared — and that it should give the matter more study.

The commission's concerns, of course, are not limited to the United Kingdom. In fact, most of its criticisms of Britain's nuclear program are surfacing in the United States, particularly in the debates now swirling around nuclear safety initiatives which are on the ballots of six states in the Presidential election. (The states are Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Ohio, Oregon and Washington.) Thus, the nuclear industry in the United States has been very active in attacking the report.

Industry spokesmen have been pointing out that the report was not completely one-sided, that it praises the industry's record and that it dismisses some of the complaints of the anti-nuclear movement. But the fact remains that on the key nuclear power issues — waste management, plutonium recycle and breeder reactors — the commission comes down heavily on the side of the nuclear critics. For that reason, the report is going to have lasting impact well beyond the shores of the British Isles. —CN

UK Science Budget Declines with Pound

The precipitate decline of the British pound in relation to other European currencies is causing problems for Britain's research managers, and may result in more cutbacks. The problem is that each time the pound shrinks in value, Britain's contributions to international projects increase by a corresponding amount. A year ago, for example, a $2.4 million share in an international project cost Britain £1 million; it now costs about £1.4 million.

According to a report in the current issue of *Nature,* devaluation of the pound so far this year has cost Britain an extra £6 million to participate in such programs as the CERN accelerator and the European Space Agency.

One irony in the situation is that Britain has recently adopted a policy of reducing domestic expenditures on big science projects and relying more heavily on participation in European facilities (SGR Vol. VI, No. 5). Now that the cost of international projects is going up, however, the British government may be forced to take the knife to small, domestic projects to meet its European obligations.

OTA Slapped by House-Senate Budget Conferees

Fresh from separate blows delivered by one of its senior advisers and a House staff inquiry (SGR Vol. VI, No. 12), the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) has now been rapped hard by the members of Congress who provide it with money.

The criticisms all follow the same line, namely, that OTA, now nearly three years old, has done some valuable work, but its internal operations are a mess, its sense of priorities are askew, and it can no longer use the excuse that it's still a baby.

The latest assault on OTA is in a House-Senate appropriations conference report, which decreed that OTA will have to get along without any budgetary increase, except for a small amount to cover a recently approved government-wide salary raise. Though the Senate had voted for an $8 million appropriation, the conferees agreed to the near-standstill figure of the House, $6.6 million. They accompanied their decision with language that alternated between harshness and paternalism, though the former predominated.

"The conferees are aware," the report states, "that much discussion within the Congress surrounds the conduct of OTA's business; some comments are complimentary and some are highly critical. It is incumbent upon the OTA, as a young organization, to prove its worth to the Congress."

The report went on to praise OTA's work in energy, oceans, and transportation, noting that in response to criticisms raised by a staff study of the House Commission on Information and Facilities, OTA Chairman Olin Teague (D-Texas.) had approvingly cited OTA work in those fields.

Then came the harsh language: "The conferees have serious reservations, however, with a number of the other studies and feel that the level of funding allowed will give the organization an opportunity to take a critical look at its operation, its priorities, and the quality of its projects' content. Nonproductive and underproductive areas, and those areas not responding to a clear and compelling Congressional need, should be pared. The conferees hope the OTA will be able to resolve its weaknesses and will be closely monitoring OTA's performance and its ability to respond to its legislative mandate by producing materials that the Congress can use."

The conferees were obviously taking their cues from the House Commission staff report to which they re-

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Research Unit Reprieved

Just before it adjourned for the November elections, Congress voted to extend by one year the life of the National Commission for the Protection of Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The commission, which has already completed studies of the ethical implications of research on prisoners, fetal research and psychosurgery, was due to wind up on December 31 with half of its agenda uncompleted.

Congress tacked the one-year extension provision on to a controversial bill providing funds for emergency medical services, however, and there's some doubt about whether Ford will sign the measure. If he doesn't, the commission's term will expire before Congress returns next year.

Still on the commission's agenda are the prickly topics of whether, and under what circumstances, the involvement of children and the institutionalized mentally infirm should be permitted by HEW. An amendment passed by Congress last year also directs the commission to make a study of how society should prepare for new advances in technology — a mandate which could give the commission a chance to discuss public control of recombinant DNA experiments.

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Research Leaders Fear Lack of Public Esteem

The predominant concern among research vice presidents and departmental chairmen at leading universities in the United States is that the federal government has been funding a growing proportion of applied, highly targeted research at the expense of basic studies. The chief concern of their counterparts in industry, however, is that government regulations are forcing them to shift R&D resources into relatively non-productive areas. They also complain that the regulations are frequently developed without much attention to cost-benefit analysis.

Those, perhaps unsurprising concerns are voiced with considerable unanimity by respondents to a survey conducted late last year by the National Science Board (NSB), the policymaking council of the National Science Foundation. The NSB sent 900 questionnaires to the nation's most influential research managers, and it has published the raw responses in its 8th annual report as the NSB's contribution to the Bicentennial.

Though nobody should read the report with hopes of finding new thinking, it provides perhaps the most complete account of the problems which the leaders of the scientific community believe to be paramount. It also provides evidence of some misconceptions about public attitudes toward science and scientists.

Most of the respondents to the questionnaire expressed anxiety about diminished public confidence in science and, according to the NSB's commentary on the responses, "this decline is believed to be responsible for certain unfavorable attitudes within government . . . these attitudes in turn lead to actions by government that are detrimental to research." The report continues: "There was widespread agreement that the public does not adequately understand science or appreciate its importance. Accordingly, the respondents saw an urgent need for improved communication between the scientific community and the public, and even for a program of education directed to the public."

On the other hand, the NSB sifted through the public opinion surveys which have been produced in recent years, and found that, though the data are incomplete and often superficial, "science itself seems to be highly regarded by the public." Moreover, though there has been a general drop in public esteem for public institutions since the mid-1960's, "in comparison with other professionals (scientists) have held their own or even gained." Finally, the report notes that there's no evidence to show that a public education program would alter governmental actions with respect to science.

(The report, "Science at the Bicentennial", is available from the Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402, for $2.95. Ask for No. 038-000-00280-5).

OTA *(Continued From Page 3)*

ferred, and a critical letter of resignation that Caltech President Harold Brown wrote last year when he relinquished the chairmanship of OTA's advisory council. However, apart from a great deal of backbiting and gossip concerning OTA's internal organization, it is difficult for outsiders to get a firm understanding of what, if anything, seriously ails the organization. SGR has received anonymous communications, allegedly from OTA staff members, complaining of poor internal communications, lack of clear directions from OTA Director Emilio Q. Daddario, and so forth — standard gripes in many organizations.

Daddario is a former member of the House and appears to run OTA like a Congressional office, which generally means an absence of chain of command, lots of papers flying around the shop, everyone doing a bit of everything, and no one quite certain of who's doing what. If the process is followed by re-election, it's judged a success; if not, it doesn't matter.

There is yet to be, however, a serious examination of the substance of OTA's work. In response to the House Commission criticisms, Teague and Daddario assembled a great collection of laudatory comments about OTA's work. But since most of them came from Congressmen who found the OTA's analyses useful for what they were pushing legislatively, such comments are suspect.

It sounds a bit ridiculous, but what's needed now are some good studies of OTA's studies. There is a large output available for examination. The chairmanship of OTA's Congressional Board reverts to the Senate in the next Congress, which means that Senator Edward Kennedy will return to the helm.

A useful early step would be for him to appoint a committee of competent outsiders, specialists in the stuff that OTA examines and reports on, to assign some grades to the agency's products. The misrouting of mail from Daddario to folks down the line can fill the conversation of many coffee breaks, but has nothing to do with the serious question of whether OTA is a worthy organization.

The only thing that counts is the quality of its reports to the Congress. On that subject, there are many assertions, but no objective assessments. —DSG

Battle Over Location Delays European Project

London. Although porkbarrel politics concerned with scientific projects may have been on the wane in the United States recently, thanks largely to a shortage of big projects, it is alive and well in Europe. For nearly two years, Europe's next step forward in fusion research has been held up while the Commission of the European Community and the members of the Community (the Common Market) have been arguing over where to locate a large international fusion machine, the Joint European Torus (JET).

The design for JET — a Tokamak plasma containment device about the same size as the proposed Princeton Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor in the United States — was ready early in 1975, when the cost was estimated at 135 million units of account (about $145 million).

EEC co-operation on fusion was relatively trouble free when it was mostly a case of coordinating national projects. No European country could afford to go it alone with a machine as big as JET, however, so this project called for international collaboration. The fight started when it came to picking a site.

France, West Germany and the United Kingdom all believe they have the best location for JET. But this is an EEC issue and the EEC Commission — the Brussels bureaucracy that is the EEC's civil service — wants the project to go to its Joint Research Centre at Ispra in Italy. Not unnaturally, the Italian government has gone along with that choice. However, Ispra has a poor record; it has a disastrous history of poor labor relations and, thanks partly to EEC indecisiveness, Ispra's scientific standing is not high. Consequently the fusion community has united against the site. The scientific community wants JET to go to a research establishment with a proven track record on fusion.

The EEC and Europe's politicians have made little progress in trying to settle the site issue.

And the next meeting of the Council of Research Ministers (on 21 October) at which the matter will be discussed, is not likely to make a decision either.

The chief difficulty has been the Commission's insistence that Ispra is the best place for JET. It has argued that the project should be built at an international site that can be built up into a permanent center of excellence. It does not want to see the focus of the effort moved from country to country as subsequent, larger containment machines are built.

At long last the Commission has shown some signs that it accepts that Ispra may be unacceptable, and that its insistence on this site has held up agreement. (It is now universally accepted that any decision is better than no decision.) At the beginning of October the Commission released details of a proposal which could break the deadlock by handing the issue over to a team of high-level scientific advisors — the JET Council. The Commission has proposed that if a decision is not reached by the end of the year, the Council of Ministers should agree to accept the advice of the JET Council. The politicians may not accept this ploy, but by making this proposal the Commission is signalling to the ministers that it is ready to accept a decision against Ispra. The Commission's move allows it to save face because it does not have to withdraw Ispra from the race and back another runner.

The European fusion community is thoroughly fed up with the whole business. Few of the scientists involved have any idea of what the Commission is doing, and why it is doing it. There have been well placed leaks to the effect that if they do not hear something soon, many of the people working on the team that designed JET will accept the offers made by "poachers" from the United States, who are said to have offered good salaries to scientists willing to "defect" to the US's fusion program. The Commission is doing its bit to frighten the politicians into action by making comments about Europe's losing its lead in fusion research. These statements are quite clearly nonsense; Europe has done well to hold its position alongside the US and USSR. With a research program of around $120 million a year, Europe's effort is about half that of the US. —MK

NSB Open to Sunshine

After campaigning long and hard to preserve the secrecy of its meetings, the National Science Board (NSB), the policy-making body of the National Science Foundation, is finally being forced to open its doors to public observers. The key is the so-called "Government in the Sunshine," bill which Congress passed last month and President Ford reluctantly signed into law.

The NSB has in the past denied requests under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to open up its meetings, arguing that it is not an advisory committee but an executive board. Since that is exactly the type of body covered by the Sunshine bill, the NSB has no option but to conform to the requirements of open government.

The Board's next meeting will be held October 21 and 22 at the NSF headquarters, 1800 G St. NW, Washington DC.

Women Academics Show Job Gains but Salary Losses

Statistics published last month by two separate government agencies paint different pictures of the employment status of women in higher education institutions in the United States.

The National Science Foundation reports that between 1974 and 1975, employment of women scientists in academic institutions increased at a rate three times greater than that of men. Women now hold about 15 per cent of all faculty positions in science and engineering departments of US universities and colleges.

But, a couple of weeks later, the Department of Health Education and Welfare reported that salaries of women faculty members increased more slowly than those of men during the same period. The average salary for men in all disciplines rose 6.7 per cent, compared to 6.1 per cent for women. According to Marie D. Eldridge, Administrator of HEW's National Center for Education Statistics, "the dollar gap between men and women's salaries is now greater than in 1974-75 at all faculty ranks."

Though neither report offers much explanation of the trends, one plausible explanation for the contrast between the NSF and HEW figures is that the growth in numbers of women faculty members has been mostly at the lower end of the faculty hierarchy. The HEW statistics show, for example, that while the number of men at the rank of full professor increased by 3.7 per cent the number of women professors rose by only 0.9 per cent. By contrast, the number of men at the rank of lecturer increased by 3.2 per cent, compared with a 10.8 per cent jump in the number of women lecturers.

The NSF report also notes that private academic institutions employed 1 per cent fewer scientists and engineers in 1975 than in 1974, while public institutions reported a 4 per cent overall increase in the number of their science and engineering faculty members.

(The NSF report, NSF 76-311, is available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402 for $1.45. Quote stock No. 038-000-00-287-2.)

GAO Hits ERDA Role in Calif. Nuclear Debate

Allegations have long been flying around that the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) aided opponents of the controversial California nuclear safety initiative by flooding the state with pro-nuclear leaflets shortly before the vote on the initiative last June. If ERDA officials deliberately attempted to influence the vote, they would not only have violated the agency's self-proclaimed policy of non-intervention in state referenda, but they may also have violated some federal laws.

Last week, the General Accounting Office (GAO) confirmed that ERDA did indeed send 78,600 copies of a blatantly pro-nuclear pamphlet to its offices and major contractors in the state between February and April, and that the documents were used by the nuclear industry in its campaign against the initiative. GAO said that the pamphlets were "misleading" and amounted to "propaganda."

The GAO report also said that it is difficult to believe ERDA's explanation that the documents were intended solely for internal distribution, adding tartly that "ERDA should not place itself in the position of misleading others — whether it be the public or its own employees."

A total of 100,000 copies of the pamphlet, called "Shedding light on nuclear energy", were printed, and most of them were promptly shipped off to California. According to ERDA, the documents were part of a campaign to raise the morale of employees and contractors working on the controversial liquid metal fast breeder program, by providing them with a defense against some of the more common criticisms of nuclear power. ERDA found it hard to explain, however, why 100,000 copies were printed when only 6,700 people are working on the breeder program, and why a disproportionate number was sent to California at that particular time.

Even if ERDA's explanation is genuine, however, the GAO report argues that distribution of the pamphlet should have been tightly controlled and, because it could have been interpreted as official agency policy, ERDA should have ensured the pamphlet's objectivity. Instead, the document "has only served to raise questions about the agency's credibility", GAO states.

But, having confirmed the substance of the complaints against ERDA, the GAO report then goes on to state that there is no hard evidence of legal violations on ERDA's part. In short, although ERDA produced propaganda leaflets, sent thousands of copies to California before the referendum, and failed to prevent

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Ford Names Agricultural Scientist to Science Board

With Congress only a few days from the October adjournment, President Ford nominated seven people to fill long-outstanding vacancies on the National Science Board, the policy-making council of the National Science Foundation. The positions have been vacant since May 10.

The nominees are mostly longtime participants in the Washington science advisory network, but one in particular deserves special mention. In response to a letter from Reps. Thomas Foley (D-Wash.) and William Wampler (R-Va.), respectively the chairman and ranking Republican on the House Agriculture Committee (SGR Vol. VI, No. 7), Ford has nominated an agricultural scientist to the National Science Board for the first time. He is William F. Hueg Jr., Professor of Agronomy at the University of Minnesota. In a statement last week, Wampler praised the nomination, declaring that it marks "an excellent beginning toward restoring agricultural science to its proper position in American science," rhetoric which should go down well with Wampler's farming constituents.

The other nominees, all of whose terms will expire on May 10, 1982, are: Raymond Bisplinghoff, Chancellor of the University of Missouri at Rolla and former deputy Director of NSF; Lloyd M. Cooke, Corporate Director for Community Affairs at Union Carbide Corp; Herbert Doan, Doan Associates, Midland, Michigan; John R. Hogness, President of the University of Washington, Seattle and former President of the Institute of Medicine; Marian E. Koshland, Professor of Bacteriology and Immunology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Alexander Rich, Professor of Biophysics, MIT.

The nominations were confirmed by the Senate on September 30.

ERDA *(Continued From Page 6)*

them from being used in the campaign, GAO said it could find "no evidence . . . that ERDA made a conscious effort to distribute copies to intentionally defeat the referendum."

A spokesman for Ralph Nader's Public Interest Research Group in Washington, which first raised allegations of wrongdoing by ERDA, said last week that the GAO had failed to consider other evidence of ERDA's role in the California campaign. Last July, the group obtained copies of ERDA documents which indicate that, among other things, the agency's San Francisco office sent some 500 letters to various groups, suggesting that they ask ERDA to provide speakers at their meetings.

Nevertheless, the publicity given to ERDA's role in the California debate should encourage the agency to stay well clear of involvement in the campaigns now swirling around similar initiatives which will be on the ballots in Arizona, Montana, Colorado, Ohio, Oregon and Washington on November 2.

A few days after the GAO report was published, ERDA announced that it will recall all outstanding copies of the pamphlet and ensure that they will not reach the public. GAO said that it was concerned that several thousand copies of the pamphlet which had not been distributed might end up being used to influence public opinion.

(Copies of the report, "Evaluation of the Publication and distribution of 'Shedding light on facts about nuclear energy,'" are available for $1 from GAO, Distribution Section, PO Box 1020, Washington DC 20013. Ask for report No. EMD-76-12.)

In Print

Two catalogs of publications issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are available without charge from UNESCO's American distributor, UNIPUB, Box 433, Murray Hill Station, NY, NY 10016.

The UNESCO Press 1976 Publications List, 80 pages, lists all UNESCO books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials in print. Subjects include education, science teaching, mass communication, oceanography, and the social sciences.

Scientific Maps and Atlases Catalog 1976, described as "of major value to earth and environmental scientists," lists published and planned geological, oceanographic, climate, and other maps in the UNESCO series.

The House Committee on Science and Technology has just published a massive, two-volume compendium of recently-enacted legislation dealing with scientific and technological issues. The volumes, which contain analyses and verbatim texts of some laws, are a goldmine for government science policy watchers. Entitled "Statutory Provisions Related to Federal Research and Development", Nos. 61-914 and 61-915, the two volume set is available from the Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402 for $22.

Joint Committee Membership Skirmish on Senate Floor

A rare glimpse of the backstage political maneuvering which frequently determines the assignment of members of Congress to vacant seats on the more important committees, was provided on October 1 by an extraordinary exchange of insults on the Senate floor between Senators Mike Gravel (D-Alaska.) and Henry Jackson (D-Wash.).

Gravel, who is one of the more vociferous, though not the most effective, nuclear critic in the Senate, held hostage, and eventually killed, an important energy bill in an attempt to focus attention on his unsuccessful, 8-year effort to get a seat on the powerful Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE). At present, he is angling for one of the two vacancies created by the retirement of Senators John Pastore (D-R.I.) and Stuart Symington (D-Mo.).

When the FY 1977 authorization bill for the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) came up for debate, Gravel demanded that it be read in full before being discussed. Since the bill and the conference report on it are more than 150 pages long, Gravel's demand would have held up Senate business for at least an hour on the last day of the session, when Senators were eager to get away from Washington.

The move caught Jackson — who will succeed Pastore as the senior senator on the JCAE — by surprise, and the following exchange then took place:

Jackson: The report that is before us is a unanimous report, and it is regrettable that the Senator would undertake this kind of a move at a late hour. There is no apparent rational reason for it. I know the real reason.

Gravel: I know the reason.

Jackson: You want to be on the Atomic Energy Committee.

Gravel: That is right. I was prepared to make a deal with you.

Jackson: Imagine, a Senator of the United States. I am one who will not be blackmailed. I will tell you right now. This is a question of honor and decency. Imagine coming to me and saying he will let the ERDA conference report be adopted in consideration of my helping him get on the Joint Atomic Energy Committee. That is a fact. . . .

Gravel: Mr. President, I feel very deeply about our nuclear situation in this country. I have tried for 8 years to get on what is considered a minor committee, and I have kept my silence, knowing full well that there was a constant effort planned by certain elements of the leadership to keep me from that committee, which should have been a normal thing in a normal seniority process, for the very simple reason that I was not part of the establishment with respect to the nuclear situation. . .

At that point, an angry Jackson withdrew the bill and the ERDA authorization was killed because Congress did not complete action on the measure before the adjournment.

The episode is remarkable chiefly for the fact that the exchange took place in public. The JCAE has long been dominated by supporters of nuclear power, and it's not surprising that they have been trying to keep a maverick like Gravel out of their ranks. Also, since the JCAE is required by law to be kept fully and completely informed of ERDA's activities, it's not surprising that Gravel wants in.

As for the ERDA authorization bill, it gives the green light to several important new programs, and ERDA will be in some trouble if Congress doesn't pass a new bill promptly when it reconvenes in January.

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